



# Flower CSA Member Handbook

2023



## Welcome to the A Rocha Flower CSA!

We are excited to offer seasonal bouquets as a stand-alone CSA share this year! **Thank you for joining us on this sure-to-be beautiful journey.** Planning for your flowers began back in November – making compost, choosing varieties, ordering seeds and tubers, and preparing fields. A delightful harvest is in store for us!

Our hope is that these weekly flowers **bring you joy, connection to our farm, and encouragement** for all that life holds for you this summer.

Farmers Carly, Leah, & Abby







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# BROOKSDALE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE

## A ROCHA CANADA

A Rocha is an international non-profit organisation **focused on environmental conservation** springing from Christian faith. A Rocha (pronounced "Ah- Raw-sha") is Portuguese for "the rock." Beginning with a migratory bird research centre in Portugal, A Rocha is now established in over 20 countries. A Rocha's philosophy includes a long-term commitment to caring for specific places with all its communities – from humans to other mammals, birds, fish, and soil.

A Rocha Canada began in the early 2000s with several families purchasing land in Surrey, which became Kingfisher Farm. In 2010, A Rocha was invited to an 18-acre site down the road, now the current Brooksdale Environmental Centre, and given the property entirely in 2017.

## BROOKSDALE


At the Brooksdale Environmental Centre here in south Surrey, our commitment is to the **care of the Tatalu River watershed** (Little Campbell River), which runs through the property. There are three core program areas: conservation science, environmental education, and **sustainable agriculture**. Within and around these programs, there are also conservation residents (formerly known as the internship program) along with retreats and hospitality through the Guest House.



Main house, 1952.

### For the history buffs!

The Brooksdale property is home to buildings from the early 1930s including three registered in Surrey's Community Heritage Register. Architect Ross Anthony Lort (1889-1968) designed the former estate for original owners, Sheldon Dwight "Sam" Brooks (1878 – 1946) and Greta Brooks (1890 – 1951). The Brooks family ran the Powell River Company responsible for manufacturing the first roll of newsprint in British Columbia. The Brooks family purchased this property in 1933.



Some of the fir trees around the farm  
are **over 300 years old!**





## OUR FARM & GROWING PRACTICES

Our farm is located at A Rocha Canada's Brooksdale Environmental Centre at 1620 192 Street in south Surrey. We manage 2.5 acres of vegetable production. In 2022, half of the fields were **transitioned to no-till production** – an exciting development for soil and water conservation!

We use **regenerative practices** including the use of cover crops, crop rotations, and planting habitat for beneficial insects. We're transitioning to no-till production to minimize the physical disturbance of our soil and increase soil organic matter content. This **sequesters carbon** into the ground to mitigate carbon emissions and **increase our resilience to climate change**.

While we are not certified organic, our practices are considered organic so you can rest assured **no synthetic chemicals are applied** to the land or your flowers. If you have questions, do ask – we love to talk about farming!

## UNDERSTANDING THE CSA RISK

As a member, you will share in both the **abundance of our harvests as well as the risks of farming**. Although we can navigate around most problems, it is likely that every year there may be something unpredictable – drought, disease, insects, hail, or other things outside of our control. This may affect specific flowers for the season.

We'll do our best to **make sure you have the values of your shares**, shift our next planting successions, or even buy in flowers from a local partner if needed. You'll be in the loop via our farm newsletters and we ask for you to be patient with us. **We're all in this together** – our few sorrows and many joys will be collective!

# HOW OUR FLOWER CSA WORKS

## COMMUNICATION

Anytime you need, feel free to **reach out to farmers Carly, Leah, or Abby** at [csa@arocha.ca](mailto:csa@arocha.ca).

We send out weekly **CSA member newsletter via email** (and one before the first harvest). Weekly email newsletters are our primary way to give you instructions for picking up your bouquets, share fun flower facts & resources, and show you the inside scoop from the farm. **Make sure emails from [csa@arocha.ca](mailto:csa@arocha.ca) don't get lost** in your spam or promotional folders.

## PICK UP SITES

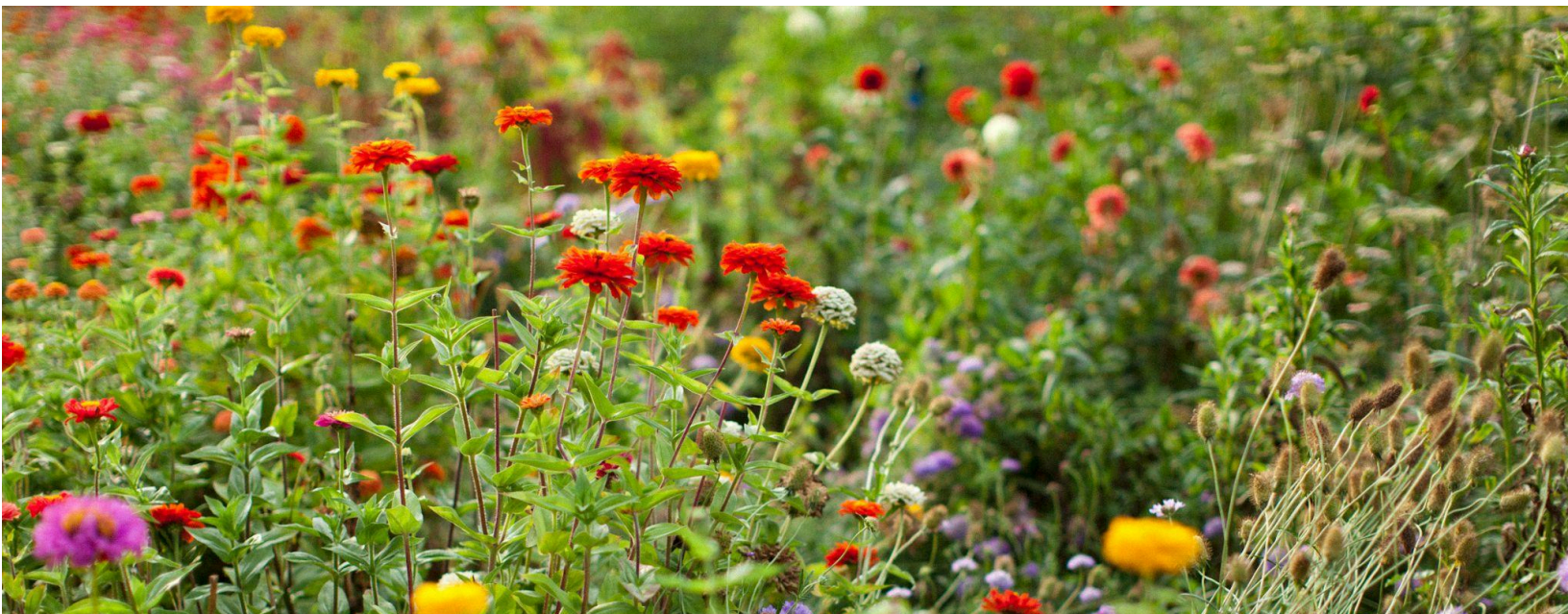
Pick up your shares on **Fridays** at the spot you chose at sign up:

- + **At our farm between 1-7pm**
- + **East Vancouver site 2-8pm.** *We'll email the exact address before your first pick-up.*

For those coming to our farm, below is a site map for your reference. **Bouquets will be available in our big yellow barn.** You'll park and walk past the farm store to get to the barn. Detailed instructions will be in our CSA member newsletter!







## STARTING DATE

The first pick up day is planned for **Friday, July 14** and will continue for a total of **10 lovely weeks** through to mid-September.

## WEEKLY BOUQUETS

Each week, you can **collect your hand-tied bouquet** at your chosen pick up site. **Each week will be a different spread of colors and flowers.** With proper care and depending on the varieties, your flowers can last 7-10 days – see our [Flower Care 101](#) for tips!

Note! we do not provide vases, so be sure to **have a cup (or travel mug!) of cool water ready** for your trip home. Bouquets are wrapped with compostable paper – no plastic liners here.

## CSA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Your membership in our flower CSA gives you these benefits:

- + **Weekly hand-tied seasonal bouquet** (different every week!)
- + Weekly **e-newsletter** to connect you with our farm
- + Discounts & first access to **on-farm workshops**
- + Invitations to visit the farm for a **CSA member tour & CSA member picnic**

## MISSING WEEKS OR PLANNING VACATIONS

If you will be away during the harvest season, feel free to have friends or family pick up your bouquet. Vacations are a great way to share the CSA experience with someone else!

## CAN SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP?

Definitely. If you cannot pick up your share yourself, simply send a substitute! All they have to do is **give your name** during pickup.



## MEMBERSHIP PERKS & FARM EVENTS

### ON-FARM WORKSHOPS

We are planning **several Saturday workshops** this summer and fall using our farm-grown goodies – we're excited! As a CSA member, you will have **early access to sign up** for workshops and a **discount** given in your CSA newsletters. We will send more details closer to the growing season but our short-list includes:

- + Natural botanical dyes
- + Farm-fresh herbal drinks (teas, shrubs, and lacto-fermentation)
- + Dried flower wreath-making
- + Seed saving 101

### CSA MEMBER FARM TOUR (JUNE)

We will offer a **farm tour** at one of your June pickups (for those in Vancouver, we can have your flowers here for pick up if you plan to make the trip). Stay tuned for details and date in your CSA newsletters. We'd love to connect with you and have you learn about the land that feeds you.

### CSA MEMBER PICNIC (JULY)

In July, we will host a Saturday **CSA members-only picnic** to enjoy the fullness of summer on the farm! Bring your own picnic feast along with your blankets, friends, kids, and (leashed) dogs. **We will provide some farm-fresh herbal drinks.**

### ANNUAL SITE EVENTS

#### SUMMER CELEBRATION (JULY)

In July, A Rocha Canada hosts an annual Saturday summer celebration for a family-friendly afternoon with tasty food trucks, kids' activities, guided tours, live music, and more! Stay-tuned on our website and CSA newsletter for the date and line-up.

#### HARVEST CELEBRATION & PUMPKIN PICKING (OCTOBER)

In October, A Rocha Canada hosts an annual Harvest Celebration with kid's activities, music, apple pressing, folk dancing on the lawn, hay rides, and more.



# FLOWER CARE 101

## BEST PRACTICES

- I. **Choose a clean container.**  
This prevents premature aging.
- II. **Fill with cool water & check the water level!**  
Cut flowers are thirsty the first few days. If you have an opaque vase, be extra careful to fill water high enough to reach all stems and check twice a day to refill.
- III. **Strip foliage below the water line.**  
Foliage sitting in the water will eventually rot and make your blooms fade prematurely.
- IV. **Keep your bouquet in a shaded, cool spot away from direct sunlight.**  
Flowers in the sunlight will continue trying to grow.
- V. **Keep away from ripening fruit & vegetables.**  
What ripens your produce – heat & naturally released ethylene gas – are the same things that spoil your flowers.
- VI. **Refresh your water every 2 days & trim as needed.**  
Trim your stems every other day to expose fresh tissue to take up water. Use clean pruners or a sharp kitchen knife (avoid regular scissors that squish or tear the stems).
- VII. **Use flower food.**  
See our recipes below for how to make your own from household ingredients!



## FLOWER FOOD RECIPES

Make your own flower food to keep bouquets lasting longer. These recipes are for a quart of water. Simply add these ingredients to your water, stir, and then add your flowers.

### RECIPE ONE

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar

### RECIPE TWO

1 teaspoon sugar  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
½ teaspoon bleach



## PAYMENT POLICY

### HOW TO PAY

For our flowers, **shares must be paid in full** to secure your spot.

There are two payment methods at [sign-up on our website](#):

1. **Pay online.**
2. **Pay via cheque.** We will wait two weeks to receive your cheque. If it is not received by then, we will consider your share sign-up void. Cheques can be written to A Rocha Canada with a note or “**CSA Payment**” in the memo line and mailed to 1620 192 Street, Surrey, BC V3Z 9V2.

If you have any questions, send us a note at [csa@arocha.ca](mailto:csa@arocha.ca).



## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

**Membership costs are not refundable.** This is because we use the money early in the year to pay for our upfront costs (seeds, compost, labor, etc.) in order to plant your flowers. If you would like to end your membership mid-season, we ask that you find someone to take over your share (send us an e-mail at [csa@arocha.ca](mailto:csa@arocha.ca) to coordinate a transfer).

**Exceptions can certainly be made for unforeseen circumstances** such as illness, life-changes, etc. If you have to move out of the area and cannot continue your share, we can offer a refund on a prorated basis.

## SHARE PRICE ASSISTANCE >> [GIVE HERE](#)

Did you know?... we're also a charity! **We gave away 15 vegetable shares last year for free to local newcomer families** through our [Farm to Families program](#) thanks to many supporters. We'd like to do it again!

**If you are able to this year, [consider giving 15% above your share cost](#).** You can donate to our Share Price Assistance fund after you sign up (or any time!). As a registered charity, any donations are tax deductible. This fund goes to two things:

- + **Free veggie shares** to local newcomer families or others in need of full assistance.
- + **Discounted veggie shares** to other CSA members who need some financial assistance this year.





# SAFETY ON THE FARM

Our cut **flowers are not for human or pet consumption**. Do keep them safely out of reach from young children and pets. **If you have sensitive skin, wear gloves or wash your hands well** after handling your flowers.

We are a working farm and while we minimize any risks to you and your family when you are visiting, do keep these things in mind:

- + **Uneven ground** and tripping hazards are present like irrigation lines.
- + **Douglas fir trees** around our barn and fields drop branches in windy conditions (and sometimes out-of-the-blue!).
- + **Farm equipment and tools** should not be moved or used.
- + **Dogs** are welcome at pickup but must be leashed if they are outside of your vehicle as we often host school groups on-site and other events.
- + **COVID-19 protocols** should be followed according to public health guidelines. If you're sick for any reason and cannot pick up your share, ask a friend to pick it up for you.

**Please supervise your children and pets at all times.**

**No adults, children, or pets should enter any of the farm fields** with the exception of the small u-pick area when we open it to you.





Bring on those blooms!!

